

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AF-10 IO-13 SS-15 NSC-10 L-03 H-03

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: BTRA, PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: RHODESIAN HONORED AT ROOSEVELT RECEPTION

SUMMARY: CHARGE FORCED TO LEAVE PARTY GIVEN BY ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT AT WHICH RHODESIAN "AMBASSADOR" TO PORTUGAL HONORED. END SUMMARY

1. FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL GROUP NUMBERING APPROXIMATELY 48 UNDER LEADERSHIP FLORIDA COMMISSIONER FOR AGRICULTURE DOYLE CONNER WAS HOSTED JULY 21 FIRST EVENING OF THEIR PORTUGUESE VISIT BY GENERAL ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT, FORMER MAYOR OF MIAMI BEACH, AT ROOSEVELT'S COUNTRY PROPERTY NEAR LISBON. BUFFET-RECEPTION INCLUDED SOME 70 GUESTS AMONG WHOM WAS REPRESENTATIVE OF RHODESIA TO PORTUGAL COLONEL KNOX AND WIFE. KNOX KEPT INVISIBLY LOW PROFILE IN SEPARATE GARDEN UNTIL ARRIVAL TWO BUSLOADS FLORIDIANS ENABLED HIM TO MINGLE IN CROWD. MID-WAY THROUGH EVENING ROOSEVELT LAUNCHED SERIES OF TOASTS DURING WHICH COMMISSIONER CONNER PRESENTED TOKENS OF FLORIDA'S ESTEEM TO FORMER PORTUGUESE AMBASSADOR TO U.S. VASCO GARIN AND TO CHARGE POST. ROOSEVELT THEN CALLED UPON KNOX TO STEP FORWARD WHO WAS SIMILARLY HONORED AND REFERRED TO BY CONNER AS "RHODESIAN AMBASSADOR."

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2. KNOX IN THANKING CONNER DELIVERED AGGRESSIVE, WELL-TUNED SPEECH IN WHICH HE (1) THANKED HOST AND CONNER FOR THEIR KINDNESSES WHICH HE WOULD REPORT BY TELEGRAM TO PRIME MINISTER IAN SMITH (2) EXPRESSED KNOWLEDGE OF FLORIDA GROUP'S PREVIOUS TOURS IN AFRICA AND HOPED MEMBERS NOT ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH RHODESIA WOULD INCLUDE IT IN FUTURE TRAVEL (3) DECLARED THAT, ""WITH ALL DUE RESPECT TO THE AMERICAN CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, AMERICA HAS NO FINER AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL THAN ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT," (4) REITERATED INVITATION TO FLORIDIANS TO VISIT RHODESIA TO SEE FIRSTHAND "THAT WE ARE NOT THE BLACK COUNTRY WE ARE MADE OUT TO BE." CHEERING APPLAUSE FOLLOWED LAST COMMENT. CHARGE ABANDONED PARTY AT ONCE.

3. INVITATION TO KNOX NOT COMMUNICATED TO CHARGE BY HOST ROOSEVELT EITHER BEFORE OR DURING PARTY. COMMISSIONER CONNER PERHAPS UNAWARE POLITICS OF SITUATION BUT EVIDENTLY WAS TOLD, EITHER BY ROOSEVELT OR GROUP MEMBER, THAT RHODESIAN DESERVED INCLUSION IN TOASTS ALONG WITH OTHER DIPLOMATS PRESENT.

4. CHARGE CALLED ROOSEVELT JULY 23 TO EXPRESS DISPLEASURE OVER INCIDENT, WHICH HAD PLACED HIM IN INTOLERABLE POSITION OF BEING CO-RECIPIENT OF HONORS ACCORDED BY AN OFFICIAL OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF ILLEGAL REGIME, AND THAT BY REFERRING TO KNOX AS "AMBASSADOR" CONNER HAD CONFERRED GREATER DIGNITY ON HIM THAN EVEN GOP DOES. ROOSEVELT SAID HE HAD BEEN COMPLETELY UNAWARE THAT CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD CAUSE DIPLOMATIC INCIDENT AND EXPRESSED APOLOGIES.

5. WHILE CLAIM TO POLITICAL/DIPLOMATIC INNOCENCE BY ROOSEVELT (WHO IS APPARENTLY FAIRLY CLOSE FRIEND OF KNOX) STRETCHES THE IMAGINATION, HIS EXPLANATION AND APOLOGY SEEMED ENTIRELY SINCERE.
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